

IOWA BenchPress



Newsletter of the Iowa Judicial Branch

November-December 2001

Supreme Court Decides to Keep Clerk's Office in Each County; Drops Restructuring Idea

Earlier this month the Iowa Supreme Court announced that it would keep a clerk of court office in every county and not pursue the portion of a proposed restructuring plan that would have merged many clerk of court offices. The plan, which was developed by the Judicial Council as a vehicle for public discussion about court consolidation, drew sharp criticism from lawyers, abstractors, county officials, and others.

"The idea of court service centers and consolidation of clerks' offices is dead as far as our court is concerned. There was too much opposition to the idea of consolidation," said Chief Justice Lavorato during a taping of "Iowa Press," an Iowa Public Television program. The program will air on January 4 and 6.

The Court received more than 200 letters from concerned citizens and local officials, most of who saw the consolidation idea as the beginning of the end for their communities. Apparently, however, many Iowans favor consolidation services. A recent Des Moines Register Iowa Poll, which was released on December 23, found that 56% of Iowans favor consolidation of court services and 66% would be willing to drive to a neighboring county for services.

Although the Court dropped the idea of consolidating clerks' offices, it will pursue other streamlining ideas. The Court intends to ask the legislature to give the Court authority to determine the configuration and number of judicial districts, and to eliminate the mandate for a clerk of court in every county, while still maintaining an

office in every county. The Court has not adopted any specific plans for new judicial districts or the number of clerks.

Chief Justice Lavorato said, "For now, we'll have to do more with less and limp along for awhile. We must convince the legislature that the judicial branch cannot afford any more cuts. More cuts would place the court system on the brink of a constitutional crisis."

Chief Justice Louis Lavorato will appear on "Iowa Press", an Iowa Public Television interview program on:

January 4 at 6:30 pm

January 6 at noon

In central Iowa, Iowa Press will be shown on channel 11. Check local listings for your channel number.

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Judges Present 2000 Award of Merit to Pelton

In November, the Iowa Judges Association presented District Court Judge Charles Pelton, Clinton, with the association's 2000 Award of Merit. The award was presented to Pelton this year due to cancellation of the judges' conference last year.

After graduating from the University of Iowa Law School, Judge Pelton was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives, where he served for five years. While in the House, he served as chair of the House Judiciary Committee. It was during this time that the Iowa Legislature approved several key justice reforms including the Unified Trial Court Act, the revision of the Iowa Criminal Code, and judicial redistricting.

Following his service in the Legislature, Judge Pelton was appointed to two executive branch committees: the Governor's Committee on Implementation of Court reform in 1972 and the Iowa Occupation Safety and Health Review Commission in 1973.

Judge Pelton has served as a district court judge for 27 years. During his tenure with the judiciary he has served on many committees including the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Information Systems, the Advisory Committee on

Electronic Legal Research, the Committee on the 21st Century, and the Supreme Court's Planning Implementation Committee.

Judge Pelton has been active on the national scene also. He served on the National Center for State Court's Advisory Committee on Technology, and was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center. In 1998, Judge Pelton was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the National Center for State Courts.



Judge Charles Pelton

The ***Iowa Bench Press*** is published bimonthly by the State Court Administrator's Office to keep court personnel informed about court policy, projects, programs, and activities. Articles express the views of the authors or the editor and not necessarily those of the Iowa Judicial Branch.

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Visit the Iowa Judicial Branch web site at:
www.judicial.state.ia.us

Dianne Head is Now a “Fellow”

Dianne V. Head, Council Bluffs, Iowa, was named a Fellow of the Academy of Professional Reporters of the National Court Reporters Association at the annual convention in New Orleans on August 3, 2001. This award is granted by the National Association to no more than 3% of its members, and nominees must qualify in at least three of five categories designated by the Academy.

Dianne graduated from the American Institute of Business in Des Moines, Iowa, with an Associate of Specialized Business Degree, and later obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management in Human Resources from Bellevue University in Bellevue, Nebraska. Dianne has served the Judicial Branch of Iowa for twenty-five years as an official court reporter in the Fourth Judicial District.

Dianne has held every office in ICRA and was President in 1986-1987. She has served with distinction on all committees of the Iowa Court Reporters Association, chairing many of these committees over several years. She has been an Iowa representative at the National Committee of State Association meeting held during national conventions in Kansas City, Boston and Seattle. She has been a seminar speaker for NCRA in Washington, D.C. and Orlando, Florida, and has attended NCRA Leadership Conferences.

Dianne is also the recipient of the 1999 Judicial Branch Meritorious Service Award for court reporters, and the Iowa Court Reporters Association Roy Voelker Award for Distinguished Service, which is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the association.

Iowa reporters attending the convention in New Orleans celebrated Dianne's honor at the Awards Luncheon and were proud to be present the award to her on behalf of all Iowa reporters.

In addition to Dianne Head, the following Iowa court reporters have been named Fellows: Roy Voelker, N. Robert Day, M. Jane Weingart, Pamela Day, James Den Adel, and Dwight Van Wyngarden.



Attendees at the New Orleans convention included Iowa court reporters (left to right), Bev Herring-Black; Jane Fitzgerald, current ICRA president; Jane Weingart; two AIB students; Dianne Head; two AIB students; Teresa Kordick, past ICRA president; and a student from AIB.

Courts Cut Staff, Reduce Court Services

This office feels like we have suffered a death in the court family,” said Sharon Tice, Clerk of Court in Appanoose County when asked about recent staff lay-offs. Before December 3, Tice’s office had 6 employees; it now has 4.

The lay-offs were part of statewide budget cuts brought on by a significant downturn in state revenues. A special session of the Iowa Legislature met November 8 to approve nearly \$200 million in cuts, including a \$5.2 million cut in the judicial branch budget, to address the shortfall. The cut was especially hard for the judicial branch because it was preceded by two years of budget shortfalls. The Court was able to manage the past two years of shortfalls without much pain by cutting back on non-personnel items and imposing a freeze on vacancies. This year’s cut, however, was a different matter. Personnel cuts were unavoidable. (See Budget Cuts: Q&A on page 6).

To comply with the cut, the Iowa Supreme Court ordered a wide range of cuts including a sizeable reduction in the judicial branch workforce. More than 130 employees lost their jobs, 79 supervisors were downgraded to lower paying jobs, and nearly 70 employees had their work hours reduced. In addition, more than 20 vacant positions were eliminated and 80 vacant positions remain unfilled.



All components of the court system were hit by the cuts, but the clerk of court

offices, the biggest employee component in the system, were affected the most.

“I am so proud of my employees—they are good workers—they know they are needed, therefore, it is hard to understand why they must go,” said Sharon Tice.

Judge John Nagra, Chief Judge of the Seventh District, delivered lay-off notices to some employees in his district on December 3. “It was hard. These are all good people, and good employees. Giving the notice is part of the job that I’d rather not have to do, but the staff deserved to know that we really cared.”

More than 60 clerk of court offices have reduced their public hours to cope with the situation. “The clerks in the 8th District have performed wonderfully since the cuts,” said Judge Jim Blomgren, Chief Judge of

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Staff Cuts

Continued from page 4

the 8th District. "They stepped up to the plate and were very professional. Obviously it's a tough time, but they responded well."

In addition, many clerks' offices have been hit by a freeze imposed on vacancies. "In the past twelve months, my office has lost three full-time employees and four part-time. The cumulative effect of not being able to fill these vacancies has placed this office in a precarious position," said Craig Jorgensen, Clerk of Court in Woodbury County.

Lois Leary, Clerk of Court for Polk County, knows what it's like to be short on staff. Although her office did not have to lay-off employees or reduce public hours, it has been understaffed for years. "We simply do not have time to do the "extras," such as courtesy calls to attorneys or Child Support Recovery when we believe they have made an error. Some functions such as 90-days dismissals get set aside. Customers are treated with respect, but there is not time for chit-chat." Added Leary, "Vacation requests are denied more frequently than we would like. Cross training is a priority and we make time to do it. Everyone is expected to help out wherever needed."

Clerk offices aren't alone. Juvenile court services lost restitution specialists and other support staff, and had supervisors demoted. "The change in the work routine

for juvenile court officers will be difficult – it will be necessary for them to spend more time doing paper work and spend less time with clients," said John Wauters, Chief Juvenile Court Officer for the District Eight. "It will be a challenge to finish court reports and data entries on a timely basis."

Juvenile court officers are also dealing with cuts in the department of human service's budget. Those cuts will make it harder to find placements, treatment, and other services needed for kids and families. "The DHS budget for delinquency services has been hit twice this fiscal year," said Tom Horvath, Chief Juvenile Court Officer in the Second District. "These and other DHS cuts have forced significant reductions in many specialized programs dealing not only with delinquents but also with other at risk youth."

The Juvenile Restitution Program, which is part of the judicial branch appropriation, has no money at all this year. That hurts kids and victims. "The loss of money and staff to supervise juveniles doing community service or working off their debt to victims will be missed greatly by victims. And the juvenile justice system will not be able keep juveniles accountable by ordering community service or to pay back their debt to society," added John Wauters.

Many court attendants lost their jobs this month due to the cuts. The court system eliminated about 30 court attendant

positions and their duties were shifted to the clerks' office.

Despite the hardships, employees are doing their best to keep up. Craig Jorgensen praised all of his employees. "I have been particularly proud of the way my contract covered staff has persevered despite the uncertainties and anxieties created by the current financial crisis," said Jorgensen. "And my supervisors deserve full credit for promoting adaptability and bringing out the best in those they supervise."

Budget Cuts: Q&A

Where does the Judicial Branch operating money come from?

The judicial branch operates on funds appropriated each year by the legislature, and as is the case with nearly all state departments and agencies, the funds come from the State General Fund.

What was the Judicial Branch operating budget before the cut and what is it now?

The operating budget before the cut was approximately \$118.7 million. Today, it is \$113.6 million.

What is the condition of Iowa's budget?

Iowa's budget is \$4.8 billion. Last fiscal year the state had a \$59 million deficit despite mid-year cuts, and this year, before the November 8 budget cuts, the shortfall was \$158 million. State officials are current predicting a \$500 million plus shortfall for next fiscal year.

What caused the drop in state revenues?

A number of factors contributed to the drop in revenues, including tax cuts approved in recent years while the economy was booming, and more significantly, an unanticipated downturn in the state economy that began last year.

What's the budget situation for state agencies?

The legislature and governor cut nearly all state agencies and departments by 4.3%, including some of the following: the board of regents—\$28 million, department of education—\$7 million, department of human resources—\$30.9 million, department of corrections—\$7.9 million, indigent defense fund—\$1.5 million, department of revenue and finance—\$1.2 million, and department of health \$1.2 million. In addition, the legislature and governor cut their own operating budgets 4.3%.

What's the budget situation in other states?

According to *Stateline.org*, 40 states are reporting fiscal problems resulting from the slowing economy. For example, Washington has a \$1 billion shortfall in its biennial budget, Minnesota has a \$2 billion problem, and Florida has a \$1.5 billion shortfall.

What have other states done to cope with their budget problems?

At least fifteen states have, have made or plan to make cuts or freeze spending. The most dramatic budget cuts appear to be in California, where state officials implemented 15% across-the-board cuts. North Carolina raised taxes. Tennessee and Wisconsin used tobacco settlement proceeds to balance their budgets. Five states have tapped their rainy day funds.

Are courts in other states facing budget cuts?

According to the National Law Journal, courts across the country are cutting back. The California Judicial Branch is still working on its cuts for this year, but must cut \$61 million from its budget for next fiscal year. In New Hampshire, the court system must cut over \$4 million from its budget this fiscal year. The Arizona Judicial Branch is cutting back 4% or \$5.3 million. Courts in the Seattle area are facing a \$2.8 million cut. The courts in Georgia are anticipating a 2.5% cut this fiscal year. The North Carolina Judicial Branch was cut \$5.5 million this fiscal year and will be cut another \$3 million next year. The courts in Illinois and New York are expecting cuts next fiscal year.

Court officials around the country are struggling to keep the courthouse doors open. Freezing vacancies, cutting travel and routine expenses, and forgoing pay raises, are some of the steps taken to address the cuts. In New Hampshire court

officials announced that they will suspend jury trials except certain criminal trials.

Why not use the fines and fees collected by the courts to offset the cuts?

State law controls the allocation of fines and fees collected by the courts. In fiscal year 2001, \$74.4 million was deposited into state coffers. The bulk of this money was deposited directly into the State General Fund, and other funds were earmarked for programs such as the department of transportation (\$2.3 million in FY 2001) for commercial vehicle fines, the victims compensation program (\$3.4 Million in FY 2001), the court technology fund (\$1 million in FY 2001), and other programs. In addition, \$8.4 million was deposited into the funds of various cities and counties (\$8.4 million in FY 2001).

When did the Court first learn its budget would be cut by the legislature?

Shortly before the special session, Chief Justice Lavorato met with Senator Majority Leader Stewart Iverson and Senate President Mary Kramer. At the meeting, Iverson and Kramer informed the Chief Justice that the judicial branch would be treated like most state agencies—its budget would be cut 4.3%. On November 8, the legislature followed through and imposed the 4.3% cut.

What items were included in the Judicial Branch cuts?

The cuts affected all aspects of the operation. First, the Court cut as much as it could from non-personnel items such as travel, supplies, communications, and furniture and equipment, and cut technology projects. It also imposed a vacancy freeze. Second, the Court eliminated

Continued from page 6

programs that were not directly tied to case processing including CASA, domestic abuse, and mediation grants. It also eliminated all funds for hospitalization referees and alternate district associate judges. Third, it implemented cuts in the workforce. In addition, the legislature reduced the amount of the state's contribution to the judicial retirement fund for this year.

How were the cuts spread out among the various court components?

Among other things, the Court cut:

- Over \$1 million or 10.7% from state court administration including CASA, ICIS, personnel and finance, education and special projects;
- \$540,000 from district court administration;
- More than \$300,000 from juvenile court services;
- \$1.6 million from clerks of court;
- Nearly \$500,000 from court attendants;
- \$77,000 from travel;
- \$200,000 from hospitalization referees; and
- \$150,000 from court reporters.

The Supreme Court cut \$60,000 or 2.8% from its budget.

How many employees were affected by the cuts?

Over 250 employees were adversely affected, including: approximately 107 employees were laid off, 67 had their hours cut, and the positions of 79 supervisory employees were downgraded. In addition, more than 20 vacant positions around the state were eliminated and there are about 80 vacant positions being held open. The elimination of the CASA program cut 29

jobs, however, the Legislature is taking over CASA on February 1.

Why have the cuts hit some clerk of court offices more than others?

The Court applied a uniform workload formula (known as the Honsell formula) to determine how to allocate cuts to clerks' offices. Offices that exceeded the formula were cut.

The formula is a weighted workload formula developed through the use of time studies conducted in 32 counties. At the time of the study most medium and small sized offices were not automated. Separate case weights were developed for urban and rural offices to reflect the difference between manual and automated offices. The formula for offices that were not automated provided a higher staff ratio for those offices.

The budget cuts in the clerks' component affected mostly small offices because the Court applied the "urban standard" of the formula to all offices. However, the Judicial Council recommended maintaining a minimum of 2 FTEs per office regardless of the formula.

Why cut personnel?

During the past fiscal two years, the Court has cut as much as possible from non-personnel items such as supplies, travel, contractual services, and communications. But with 93% of the judicial branch's operating budget devoted to personnel, cutting personnel was inevitable.

Why demote supervisors?

The legislature and the executive branch are focusing on reducing management level. The executive branch's goal is to have one supervisor per 12 line workers. This was approved by the legislature

during the special session. The judicial branch is moving to a 1:10 ratio.

Why not use the money being spent on the new judicial building in Des Moines?

Many have questioned the wisdom of spending \$30 million on a new building in the midst of budget cuts, but the Court has no choice. The money to pay for the new building was appropriated from the State Infrastructure Fund, in four installments; the last installment was made last year. The infrastructure fund can be used only for capital projects approved by the legislature.

What's the status of the Judicial Council restructuring plan?

After reviewing the plan in December, the Supreme Court decided to drop the concept of merging or closing clerk of court offices. However, the Court decided to ask the legislature to eliminate the statutory requirement of 99 clerks of court, while still maintaining 99 clerks' offices.

In addition, the Court decided to ask the legislature to give the Court authority to change the organizational structure of the judicial districts as required for the efficient administration of justice. However, the Court did not adopt the Council's plan to decrease the number of districts from 8 to 5. If, and when, the Court reviews the structure of the judicial districts, the public would be involved in the planning process.

Bench-Bar Conference: “Branching Out”

Plans are underway for the 9th statewide Bench-Bar Conference May 16, 17, and 18, 2002 at The Inn Resort Complex at Okoboji. The conference theme, “Branching Out” guides the planning committee’s work in selecting program topics and speakers. Participating judges and lawyers will discuss how to branch out to meet evolving demands in the delivery of legal and judicial services, how to enhance recognition of the Judicial Branch as a third, co-equal branch of government, and how to raise public trust and confidence through bar and bench outreach. All Iowa judges and lawyers are invited! Registration information will be featured in a coming issue of The Bench Press and in The Iowa Lawyer.

What comes of a Bench-Bar Conference, other than an enjoyable opportunity for

bench and bar colleagues to discuss issues of interest in a casual, social setting? Ideas, and resolve for positive change: for example, the I.S.B.A.’s reform of the traditional judicial plebiscite in 2000 followed input from the Bench-Bar conferees. The report issued to the I.S.B.A. and the Supreme Court after the 2000 conference accompanies this article, and illustrates the various focal points of discussions at the last Bench-Bar gathering.



You can be a part of the action now as plans progress for the 2001 conference, by sharing your ideas with the planning committee co-chairs: Judge Annette J. Scieszinski (Email: annette.scieszinski@jb.state.ia.us; Phone: 641-932-7160; Fax: 641-932-3245) or Magistrate Elisabeth S. Reynoldson (Email: elisabet@Pionet.net; Phone: 641-342-2157; Fax: 641-342-4913).

Report of Bench-Bar Committee 2000 Conference

The 8th statewide Bench-Bar Conference was held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 18-20, 2000 at The Inn at Okoboji. A geographically balanced mix of 46 judges and 76 lawyers participated. Issues were raised and discussed in three sessions: The Future of the Courts in Rural and Urban Areas, Public Trust and Confidence in the Bench and Bar, and Bench-Bar Team Building. Several themes and ideas emerged from small-group discussions and exercises. These merit note, and should inspire action through appropriate channels in the Iowa State Bar Association and the Judicial Branch.

1. Judicial Evaluation and Accountability

- current plebiscite may be inconsistent with judicial independence.
- expanded plebiscite needed for evaluation of judges’ work, and as outlet for specific bar feedback
- evaluative input needed from all court

customers, not just lawyers
—judicial branch needs internal evaluation process for judges (perhaps utilizing chief judges)

2. Public relations:

- judicial branch should have in-house press official(s), like other branches of government, for consistent media contact
- bar should sponsor public education on how the legal system works in targeted areas of public interest where misconceptions lie, or little information is out, like domestic violence, non-English-speaking Iowans, etc.
- judges and lawyers should routinely go into the schools at all grade levels and into community forums (like service groups, commencements, etc.) to speak about the justice system, and should actively recruit courthouse visits
- lawyers must cease derogatory comments to clients about other lawyers, the system, or judges

3. Professionalism:

- lawyers should focus on the “counsel” part of their responsibility to clients, and be “accountable” lawyer-to-lawyer
- judges should view themselves as responsible for standards of conduct, and mentors, and not let bad practices slide by
- a year’s internship would better prepare new lawyers
- law schools should set high moral standards for students (regarding professionalism), like entry interviews and strict enforcement of an honor code

2002 Conference

The 2002 Bench-Bar Conference will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 16-18, 2002 at The Inn at Okoboji.

Annette J. Scieszinski and
Matthew G. Novak
Committee Co-Chairs

New Faces

Court of Appeals: **Geri Paul**, *Des Moines*, Confidential Secretary.

Rapids, **Brian Barkley**, *Iowa City*, Judicial Clerks.

CASA: **Judy Boyd**, *Des Moines*, Administrative Secretary.

District 7: **Marcia Grant**, *Davenport*, Judicial Clerk.

District 3: **Edward A. Jacobson**, *Ida Grove*, District Court Judge.

District 5: **Leisha Gritman**, *Des Moines*, **Christian Seaman**, *Des Moines*, Judicial Clerks.

District 6: **Heather Stivers**, *Cedar*

Milestones: Service Anniversaries

25 Years

Susan Stearns, Juvenile Court Officer, *Wayne County*.

John Weber, Juvenile Court Officer, *Dubuque County*.

Caroline Bertling, Judicial Clerk, *Linn County*.

Thomas Bradley, Juvenile Court Officer, *Scott County*.

30 Years

Judith Kothenbeutel, Clerk of Court, *Franklin County*.

Tony VanHelden, Juvenile Court Officer, *Clay County*.

Stephen Sears, Juvenile Court Officer, *Union County*.

William Wulf, Trial Court Supervisor, *Scott County*.

James Powers, Juvenile Court Officer, *Clinton County*.

Donna McPherren, Clerk of Court, *Buena Vista County*.

Spotlight



Woodbury Clerk of Court Employees



Pictured left to right: (back row): Wendy Hogan, Rochelle Ptak, Shirley Lindblom, Amy Berntson, Connie Culbertson, Deb Jenkins, Stacy Peterson.

(front row): Jackie Mogensen, Terri Hinrichsen, Brenda Jensen, Lupe Boykin, Holly Wardell, Rick Pridie, Carol Thallas, Linda Androy, Deb Daniels.



Pictured left to right: (back row): Karen Baldwin, Craig Jorgensen, Sandra VanHill, Julie Jones, Charlene Peterson, Terry Hansen.

(front row): Theresa Swanger, Barb Brown, Donna Smith, Sherry Miller, Mary Johnson, Becky Morehead, Shirley Johnson.

Spotlight



Judge Larry Eisenhauer Joins Court of Appeals



Judge Eisenhauer is assisted with his robe by (left) son Nathan, (center) granddaughter, Taylor, and (right) daughter, Susann .



Governor Vilsack administers oath of office.

Polk County Model Court Holds First Annual Adoption Saturday

By Judge Connie Cohen

It is Saturday, November 17, and the Polk County Courthouse is almost unrecognizable. There are no "chain gangs" of scowling prisoners clanking to courtrooms in striped jumpsuits. There are no huddles of litigants and attorneys engaged in hushed, serious conversations. Instead, the grand old building is bustling with children, families, balloons, music, displays, and refreshments. And EVERYONE is smiling.

It is National Adoption Day. On this day Des Moines joined fifteen other cities to celebrate families, finalize adoptions, and draw attention to the increasing need for qualified foster and adoptive families. More than 500 people attended the event. Twenty-one children were adopted. Judges, court staff, sheriff deputies and county personnel generously volunteered to plan this event and give up a Saturday morning to participate in its success. Volunteers also included attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Juvenile Court Officers, Department of Human Services Workers, educators, Drake Law School students, mentors, and others.

No one left empty-handed. Adorable teddy bears, donated by Comfort for Court Kids, Inc., and T-shirts, supplied by the Alliance for Children's Rights, were given to each adopted child, along with gift bags filled with donated items such as disposable cameras, toys, and other treats. Mothers received roses. Attendees enjoyed donated refreshments from generous local businesses. Volunteers reaped the benefits of their efforts as they witnessed an unqualified successful event.

Key to the success of the event were several participating agencies: KidSake, Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Foster Care Review Board, Court Appointed Special Advocates,

Mentor Iowa, Holt International, Adoption Connection, Catholic Charities, Children and Families of Central Iowa, Family Connections, Gift of Love International, Lutheran Social Services, New Horizons, and Youth Shelter and Services.

First Lady Christy Vilsack presented a proclamation for National Adoption Month, that was also being celebrated in November. She then entertained the crowd with the timely story of how Governor Vilsack came to be adopted by his parents. They told him he was four months old, and since it was nearly Thanksgiving, they decided to pick the "fattest little turkey" they could find. Other dignitaries, including Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly, City Councilman George Flagg, and Chief Judge Arthur Gamble were also on hand to commemorate the day. Sarah Gesiriech, an Urbandale native, and the Associate Director for Domestic Policy for the President of the United States, shared in the celebration. Her mother joined her. As an adopted child herself, Sarah spoke poignantly to the children about how special it is to be adopted.

The original "Adoption Saturday" was the brainchild of Los Angeles, California Judge Michael Nash and collaborators in 1998, in response to a lack of docket time in which to finalize adoptions. While adoptions are not routinely delayed because of lack of docket time in Iowa, the Polk County Model Court decided to sponsor the event for many reasons. "We wanted to be able to provide a family friendly atmosphere for these special proceedings. It was also an opportunity for many relatives and other guests of the families to attend the proceedings without having to take time

off from work or school. And, we hoped to draw attention to the growing need for families willing to open their homes and hearts to Iowa's neediest children as well as to provide information to the public," explained Judge Cohen, Model Court Lead Judge.

The Adoption Saturday Committee was led by District Court Judge Donna Paulsen and Associate Juvenile Judge Constance Cohen. There was no shortage of eager



volunteers who met over numerous noon hours for several months to plan the event. Each committee member was then on a sub committee and assigned tasks such as publicity, education, volunteer coordination, docketing, refreshments, and decorating. Thanks to all of these volunteers who helped make our Adoption Saturday successful. And a special thanks to the judges, court reporters, court attendants and clerks, without whom this opportunity would not have been possible. We hope to have them all back next year for our even bigger Second Annual Adoption Saturday.

Anyone interested in planning a local Adoption Saturday is invited to contact Judge Cohen at 515.286.3037.

2002 Iowa Legislative Session Timetable

January 14	First day of session	March 18-22	House considers only Senate bills and unfinished business and Senate considers only House bills and unfinished business
January 18	Final day for individual requests for bill drafts to LSB	March 25	House amendments need not be filed on the day preceding floor debate
February 22	Final date for House & Senate bills to be reported out of committee	March 25	Only the following bills are eligible for consideration: Appropriations Bills, Ways and Means bills, Legalizing Acts, Cosponsored by majority and minority leaders, Companion bills sponsored by House and Senate majority leaders, Conference Committee Reports, Bills passed by both Houses in different forms, Concurrent or simple resolutions, Bills on the Veto calendar, Administrative Rules Review Committee Bills, Joint Resolutions nullifying Administrative Rules, Unfinished Business
February 25 - March 1	House and Senate consider only their respective bills and unfinished business		
March 4-15	Debate not limited by rule		
March 15	Final date for Senate bills to be reported out of House committees and House bills out of Senate committees	April 13	90 th calendar day of the session